

The English Speaking Commonwealth

SOME DEMOGRAPHIC FACTS

THE POPULATIONS OF Australia, Canada and New Zealand, when taken together, amount to well over one-half of the population of the United Kingdom. The English speaking part of the Commonwealth (if these territories may be so described) now consists, therefore, of more than eighty million persons, a number substantial enough to bear in mind as a major factor when considering Common Market aims and related problems.

Forty years ago, the three overseas territories named above contained only a third as many people as the home country. The details of their rise in population to nearly two-thirds of that of the United Kingdom may be seen from the following table:

	YEAR	
	1920	1960
(Numbers in millions)		
United Kingdom	44	52½
Australia	5½	10
Canada	9	18
New Zealand	1	2½
The three Overseas Territories together	15½	30½

While, therefore, the home numbers have increased by only one-fifth, there has been a doubling overseas.

The respective average rates of growth have thus been about one-half per cent and a little under 2 per cent per annum during the last four decades. At the present time the corresponding rates are 0.4 and 2.5 per cent respectively.

The analysis of these figures for 1960 is as follows:

	UNITED KINGDOM	AUSTRALIA	CANADA	NEW ZEALAND
<i>Per thousand</i>				
Crude birth rate	17	23	27	26
Crude death rate	12	9	8	9
Net rate of natural increase	5	14	19	17
Net migration rate	—	+ 8	+ 8	+ 5
Total growth rate	5	22	27	22

The mean expectation of life at birth is close to seventy for all four countries, and the difference in the crude death rates (and also to a small extent in the crude birth rates) are attributable to disparities in age-distribution, as may be seen from the following figures:

	UNITED KINGDOM	AUSTRALIA	CANADA	NEW ZEALAND
<i>Percentage of persons aged</i>				
Under 15	23	31	34	31
15-39	33	35	35	35
40-64	32	26	24	26
65 and over	12	8	7	8
Total	100	100	100	100

The area of Australia, Canada and New Zealand taken together is about seventy times as great as that of the United Kingdom and the average population density is 100 times lower. Even so, many of the people of the overseas territories live in urban areas of high density, and their marriage, divorce and fertility experience is similar to that of the United Kingdom.